

Message Text

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43

ACTION SCCT-01

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 NEA-06 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03

H-01 INR-05 L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 RSC-01 PRS-01

SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 AID-05 IO-10 A-01 OPR-01 SY-04

USSS-00 EB-07 /090 W

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R 231534Z DEC 74

FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1990

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

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EO 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINS LE

SUBJ: "ARAB COMMUNIST ORGANIZATION" CLAIMS RESPONSIBILITY
FOR EXPLOSION AT BEIRUT DEPARTMENT STORE

1. THE SO-CALLED ARAB COMMUNIST ORG (ACO) HAS CLAIMED
CREDIT FOR TWO EXPLOSIONS WHICH DAMAGED BEIRUT'S MOST
FASHIONABLE DEPARTMENT STORE AND SUPERMARKET
EVENING DEC 21. EXPLOSIONS OCCURED AT APPROX 2125
HOURS LOCAL AT SPINNEY'S CENTER, LOCATED IN BEIRUT'S
RAMLET AL BAIDA SUBURB. BLASTS, EACH ESTIMATED AT
ONE KILO OF TNT, DID CONSIDERABLE DAMAGE TO PREMISES BUT
CAUSED NO CASUALTIES. CUSTOMERS, WHICH REGULARLY
INCLUDE MEMBERS OF DIPLOMATIC AND EXPATRIATE COMMUNITY,
HAD JUST LEFT (AT 2100 HOURS) STORE WHEN BOMBS
EXPLODED. UNITS OF PALESTINE ARMED STRUGGLE COMMAND
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(PASC), PLO MILITARY POLICE, WERE REPORTEDLY FIRST

TO SCENE, APPARENTLY ARRIVING FROM NEAR-BY MAR ELIAS REFUGEE CAMP. LEBANESE SECURITY FORCES ARRIVED SHORTLY THEREAFTER.

2. IN STATEMENT PUBLISHED DEC 23 BY LOCAL PRESS, ARAB COMMUNIST ORG., WHICH HAS PREVIOUSLY CLAIMED RESPONSIBILITY FOR EXPLOSIONS AT FIRST NATIONAL BANK OF CHICAGO BRANCH (BEIRUT 12358) AND SIMILAR ATTACKS IN LEBANON AND SYRIA, ATTACKED BRITISH-OWNED FIRM AND PROMISED FURTHER "REPRISALS" AGAINST SPINNEY'S UNLESS FIRM MEETS DEMANDS FOR DISTRIBUTION OF RICE, SUGAR AND MILK TO NEEDY FAMILIES IN VICINITY OF STORE. ACCORDING TO ACO COMMUNIQUE, FOOD PARCELS MUST BE MARKED "GIFT OF ACO."

3. COMMENT: BEIRUT, GATHERING HER INCREASINGLY TATTERED SKIRTS AROUND HER, HAS MAINTAINED HER CLAIM TO "COSMOPOLITANISM" WITH THIS GRIM EMULATION OF RECENT ATTACKS ON PROMINENT DEPARTMENT STORES IN LONDON AND ELSEWHERE. GOL HAS ANNOUNCED ONLY THAT INVESTIGATION OF ATTACKS ON SPINNEY'S CONTINUING. THIS MOST RECENT ATTACK, HOWEVER, LENDS ADDED GLOOM AND APPREHENSION TO LEBANESE CAPITAL WHICH DAILY TREATED TO ACTUAL AND ATTEMPTED BOMBINGS. INABILITY OF AUTHORITIES TO IDENTIFY AND APPREHEND ACO MEMBERS, IF THEY INDEED PERPETRATORS OF SPINNEY'S ATTACK, ALSO INCREASES SENSE OF FRUSTRATION ON PART GOL.
GODLEY

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